

November 20, 1962

Mr. McGeorge Bundy
The White House

William H. Brubeck
Executive Secretary

Cuba Contingency Plan

There is attached, with the approval of U. Alexis Johnson, 20 copies of the Revised Cuba Contingency Plan, 11/20/62 for the possible use of the Executive Committee.

Attachment:

As Stated.
Copy No. 7-26.

TOP SECRET ATTACHMENTS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED by W. H. Brubeck DATE 6/10/88
☒ UPGRADE ☒ DECLASSIFY
() ENHANCE () DECLASSIFY in PART
() DENY () Non-responsive info.
FOI, EO or PA exemptions _____
_____ TS authority to:
() CLASSIFY as _____, OADR
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Revised 11/20/62

CUBA CONTINGENCY PLAN

This memorandum consists of the following parts:

- PART I - Advice to NATO and OAS Governments regarding possible Cuban developments and US action.
- PART II - Overflights and responses.
- PART III - Additional steps to be taken in the event IL-28s not removed.

PART I

ADVICE TO GOVERNMENTS

We should set in motion machinery to provide advice to the OAS

and NATO Governments Tuesday--preferably in advance of the President's

press conference. This would involve sending out telegrams Monday *S/AL-4*

night--assuming that, prior to that time no word had been received *S-1*

from Khrushchev indicating a willingness to withdraw the IL-28s. *U-2*
G-3
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A. Advice to our Embassies in NATO and OAS Capitals. *# 27-12*
28-S/S

1. Ambassadors should arrange meetings with heads of *29-S/S*

governments or foreign ministers as early as possible on Tuesday, *30-APR*

November 20. *31-EUR*
32-S/P
33-INE
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2. Governments would be advised as follows:

(a) The United States has still been unable to obtain satisfactory performance from the USSR with regard to the withdrawal of the IL-28s.

(b) Nor have adequate arrangements been made for ground inspection in Cuba and adequate safeguards against the presence and reintroduction of offensive weapons.

(c) Recent reconnaissance has confirmed the presence in Cuba of organized Soviet military units with the most modern field equipment. These cannot be dismissed merely as "Soviet technicians".

(d) Castro has now announced that he intends to fire on US reconnaissance planes. Continued US reconnaissance is essential action authorized by OAS resolution.

(e) Since the United States must continue surveillance, there is serious possibility of an incident against which the United States is determined to take retaliatory measures.

(f) The situation is fluid and may take one of several

courses. The Soviets may act against Castro or, in any event, may not support him in exchanges that might follow his interference with US reconnaissance. On the other hand they may provide military support to Castro. The nature of the future US action will naturally depend upon which option the Soviets elect.

(g) Continued refusal on the part of the USSR to withdraw the IL-28s, or active Soviet military participation in action against necessary surveillance, might well require the re-establishment of the quarantine and its extension to POL.

(h) The President intends to make clear to the nation and the world on Tuesday afternoon the present posture of affairs and to indicate that an early resolution of the remaining problems must be achieved. This approach would of course be altered materially if a favorable answer were received from Khrushchev on IL-28s before press conference.

(1) The United States expects to be able to count on the full cooperation of its Allies in the event it becomes necessary to reimpose the quarantine--with or without an expanded proscribed list--or to take other appropriate action to deal with the situation.

B. Presidential letters containing the substance of the above message would be delivered by our ambassadors in Paris, Bonn, and London. (In addition, the latest pictures are being sent to Paris for possible use with General de Gaulle at the same time.)

C. A briefing would be arranged for Tuesday afternoon with the NATO Atlantic Council.

D. Meeting of OAS Ambassadors.

1. Meeting to be called for Tuesday to advise the OAS Ambassadors of developments to date.

2. Full meeting of the Organ of Consultation to be called this week, at which time efforts would be made to obtain resolution along the lines of Annex A.

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PART II

OVERFLIGHTS AND RESPONSES

A. High level overflights would be maintained on a daily schedule through Wednesday and the decision as to the schedule thereafter would be made in light of responses to low-level flights. No low-level overflights before Wednesday, November 21.

B. In the event that a U-2 is fired upon--and whether or not brought down--an immediate protest would be made to the Soviet Government and action would be taken to eliminate the offending SAM site.

C. The targets for the low-level flights on Wednesday, November 21, would not be those associated with the IL-28s (i.e. St. Julian or Holguin) but would be some other target of military interest, such as a port where newly arrived Soviet ships are unloading.

D. It may be presumed that fire against low-level overflights would come from Cuban sources. Low-level reconnaissance flights on Thursday would be provided with an armed escort which would fire

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against the source of the fire against the reconnaissance planes.

If a low level plane is shot down, retaliatory action would be taken as soon as possible against appropriate Cuban military targets, preferably in sparsely populated areas.

E. If overflights are continued, particularly at low level, the Cubans may attempt to interfere or may not do so. If they do attempt to interfere and US responds as indicated above, the Soviet Union will be faced with a choice whether or not to support the Cubans by military action--or whether to disengage. They can support the Cubans by participating in the attacks on US planes, utilizing their SAMs. They can also react by military action in other areas. Alternatively they can confine their reaction to diplomatic protests which might indicate their intent to disengage.

The US must plan its own lines of action based on any of the above contingencies. However, to the extent it proves feasible, we should pursue lines of action tending to encourage Soviet disengagement.

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First Assumption. That the Soviet Union would support Cuban

action by firing surface-to-air missiles. In the event that a US plane is brought down by a surface-to-air missile we have the option either of attacking one or more of the SAM-sites or of reinstalling the quarantine on an extended basis. In either event, we would be interfering directly by force with the Soviet Union--assuming that the SAM-sites are, in fact, in their hands in spite of their disavowal.

Second Assumption. That the Soviet Union would support Cuban
action by reacting elsewhere. US action would have to be generally in line with the contingency planning for the location where the Soviet reaction occurred.

Third Assumption. That the Soviet Union would give vocal and
diplomatic, but not physical, support to Cuban action against our
aircraft. In this instance, our policy should be designed, so far as possible, to encourage further Soviet disengagement. This would seem to indicate a withholding of any action--such as the reinstitution

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of the quarantine that might result in a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, we could permit the air action and counter-action to escalate to the point where we might be able to take effective military steps against the Castro regime.

PART III

ADDITIONAL STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT IL-28s ARE NOT REMOVED

If the IL-28s are not removed we can again follow one of two courses: We can get at them through Castro or confront the Soviet Union more directly. The natural means of pressure on Castro would be through intensive surveillance and air action. The alternative would be the reinstitution of some form of quarantine. This section is directed mainly to the question of ways and means of using the quarantine against the IL-28s.

A. Form of Quarantine.

The emphasis of the quarantine should be on the interdiction of imports of POL. Quite possibly we could employ a hail-and-pass procedure for most dry cargo ships, requiring the inspection only

of particularly suspicious vessels. We could justify interfering with imports of POL on the ground that POL was directly related to the utilization of the IL-28s.

B. Objective of Quarantine.

The minimum objective of the quarantine should be the removal of the IL-28s. However, a substantial argument can be made in favor of conditioning the termination of the quarantine also upon effective and continuing on-site verification--something which Castro would find very hard to accept.

It is not recommended that the termination of the quarantine be tied explicitly to the continuing maintenance of Cuba as a Soviet military base, since this would amount to an extension of the initial terms of the bargain.

One clear incidental benefit of the quarantine would be its adverse effect upon the Cuban economy and, hence upon Castro. If continued any length of time, the quarantine would require the

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adoption of such ~~restrictions on the use of POL~~--both domestic and military--as to accelerate the economic deterioration of Cuba.

C. Means of enforcing the quarantine.

These means would be essentially the same as in the last case; however, it would be desirable to increase the presence of other hemisphere naval forces on the line of blockade.

D. Priorities of Enforcement.

In the eventual application of a POL quarantine it would be best to begin with non-Bloc tankers ~~under~~ Bloc charter, proceeding to Bloc tankers, and then to Soviet tankers, in that order.

E. Assumptions under which quarantine recommended.

The above discussion suggests that we should probably not reestablish the quarantine unless the Soviet Union gives military support to Cuban action against our reconnaissance planes.

Once this had been ascertained by events, the desirability of going forward with the quarantine would then have to be determined on

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the basis of a prediction as to whether or not the Soviets would acquiesce in the quarantine or forcibly resist it. (In the Knox interview, Khrushchev is quoted as saying that he might permit one or two ships to stop and be searched but would sink the American vessel that obstructed the third one.)

The quarantine offers the advantage that it need not immediately involve a physical confrontation--although the credibility of the American action would be gravely weakened if, in this second chapter, we did not act with reasonable decision. Presumably, however, some time might be permitted in which to make it possible for Khrushchev to agree to remove the IL-28s.

Arguments can be marshalled both for and against the contention that Khrushchev would acquiesce. In support of such contention, it could be maintained:

(1) The Soviet Union might be willing to withhold the further supply to Cuba of items on the proscribed list and let the

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Cuban economy deteriorates, since it may regard Cuba as a wasting asset.

(2) Khrushchev backed down when he was in a much stronger position than he is now. At that time he had missiles pointed against the United States; now he has no such bargaining counter.

(3) By acquiescing the second time, Khrushchev could again seek the propaganda value of being the peace-maker.

Against these arguments it can be ascertained:

(1) Khrushchev yielded to the threat of our quarantine once by turning his ships around; he could not afford the humiliation of doing so a second time--especially after the missiles have been removed and he has thus claimed to have complied fully with his undertakings.

(2) Khrushchev was willing to pull back his ships carrying sophisticated weapons in order to safeguard USSR technology. He would not have a similar motive for holding back tankers filled with POL.

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(3) The USSR could not stand idly by while the economy of a

Socialist state was slowly strangled; the loss of face and the appearance of impotence would be too high a price for Khrushchev to pay.

(4) We cannot be sure that the Soviets would have acquiesced if we had actually boarded and searched a vessel. After all, we were imposing a limited form of quarantine; we let their tankers through.

The resolution of the question posed by these competing contentions is important but not necessarily controlling. Even if it appeared probable that Khrushchev might insist on running the blockade the proponents of the quarantine could still argue that the reaction would probably be limited to a restricted arena. There would be less danger of escalation in a sea action than in the reprisal for an air attack and in the event of sea action we would have clear superiority.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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() EXCISE () DECLASSIFY in PART
() DENY () Non-responsive info.

FOI, EO or PA exemptions

PART I

TS authority to:

() CLASSIFY as TOP SECRET
() DOWNGRADE TS to () S or () C, OADR

We should set in motion machinery to provide advice

to the OAS and NATO Governments Tuesday--probably in

advance of the President's press conference. This would

involve sending out telegrams Monday night--assuming that,

prior to that time no word had been received from Khrushchev

indicating a withdrawal of troops from Cuba.

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A. Advice to our Embassies in NATO and OAS Capitals.

1. Ambassadors should arrange meetings with heads of governments or foreign ministers as early as possible on Tuesday, November 20.

2. Governments would be advised as follows:

(a) The United States has still been unable to obtain satisfactory performance from the USSR with regard to the withdrawal of the IL-28s and the establishment of arrangements for group⁹ inspection and adequate safeguards against reintroduction of offensive weapons.

(b) Recent reconnaissance has confirmed the presence in Cuba of organized Soviet military units with the most modern field equipment. These cannot be dismissed merely as "Soviet technicians".

(c) Castro

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(e) "Centro" has not admitted that he

attempts to fire on US reconnaissance planes. Continued US reconnaissance is essential action authorized by C&S regulation.

(4) Since the United States must continue surveillance, there is serious possibility of an incident against which the United States is determined to take retaliatory measures.

(c) The situation is fluid and may take one of several courses. The Soviets may act against Castro or, in any event, may not support him in exchanges that might follow his interference with US reconnaissance. The nature of the future US action will naturally depend upon which action the Soviets elect.

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(F) Continued refusal on the part of the USSR to withdraw the IL-28's might well require the re-establishment of the quarantine and its extension to POL.

(G) The President intends to make clear to the nation and the world on Tuesday afternoon the present posture of affairs and to indicate that an early resolution of the remaining problems must be achieved.

(h) The United States expects to be able to count on the full cooperation of its Allies in the event it becomes necessary to reimpose the quarantine--with or without an expanded proscribed list--or to take other appropriate action to deal with the situation.

B. Presidential letters containing the substance of the above message would be delivered by our ambassadors in Paris.

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Bonn, and London. (In addition, the latest pictures are being sent to Paris for possible use with General de Gaulle at the same time.)

C. A briefing would be arranged for Tuesday afternoon with the NATO Atlantic Council.

D. Meeting of OAS Ambassadors.

- Full report to Council & drawing 100%

1. Meeting to be called for Tuesday to advise the OAS Ambassadors of developments to date.

2. Full meeting of the Organ of Consultation to be called for Friday, at which time efforts would be made to obtain resolution along the lines of Annex A.

PART II

OVERFLIGHTS AND RESPONSES

A. High level overflights would be maintained on a

daily

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daily schedule through Wednesday and the decision as to the schedule thereafter would be made in light of responses to low-level flights. No low-level overflights before Wednesday, November 21.

B. In the event that a U-2 is fired upon--and whether or not brought down--an immediate protest would be made to the Soviet Government and action would be taken to eliminate the offending SAM site.

C. The targets for the low-level flights on Wednesday, November 21, would not be those associated with the IL-28s (i.e. St. Julien or Helgair) but would be some other target of military interest, such as a port where newly arrived Soviet ships are unloading.

D. It may be presumed that fire against low-level overflights would come from Cuban sources. Low-level

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reconnaissance flights ⁱⁿ would be provided with an air cap of 8-16 interceptors at intermediate altitudes offshore, which would come in to suppress fire against the reconnaissance planes.

E. If overflights are continued, particularly at low level, the Cubans may attempt to interfere or may not do so. If they do attempt to interfere and US responds as indicated above, the Soviet Union will be faced with a choice whether or not to support the Cubans by military action--or whether to disengage. They can support the Cubans by participating in the attacks on US planes, utilizing their SAMs. They can also react by military action in other areas. Alternatively they can confine their

reaction

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reaction to diplomatic protests which, in effect, would indicate their intent to disengage.

The US must plan its own lines of action based on any of the above contingencies. However, to the extent it proves feasible, we should pursue lines of action tending to encourage Soviet disengagement.

First Assumption. That the Soviet Union would support Cuban action by firing surface-to-air missiles. In the event that a US plane is brought down by a surface-to-air missile we have the option either of attacking one or more of the SAM-sites or of reinstating the quarantine on an extended basis. In either event, we would be interfering directly by force with the Soviet Union--assuming that the SAM-sites are, in fact, in their hands in spite of their discovery.

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Second Assumption. That the Soviet Union would support

Cuban action by reacting elsewhere. US action would have to be generally in line with the contingency planning for the location where the Soviet reaction occurred.

Third Assumption. That the Soviet Union would give moral and diplomatic, but not physical, support to Cuban action against our aircraft. In this instance, our policy should be designed, as far as possible, to encourage further Soviet disengagement. This would seem to indicate a withholding of any action--such as the reinstitution of the quarantine--that might result in a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, we could permit the air action and counter-action to escalate to the point where we might be able to take effective military steps against the Castro regime.

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PART III

ADDITIONAL STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT
IL-28s ARE NOT REMOVED

If the IL-28s are not removed we can again follow one of two courses: We can get at them through Castro or confront the Soviet Union more directly. The natural means of pressure on Castro would be through intensive surveillance and air action. The alternative would be the reinstitution of some form of quarantine. This section is directed mainly to the question of ways and means of using the quarantine against the IL-28s.

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A. Form of Quarantine.

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The emphasis of the quarantine should be on the interdiction of imports of POL. Quite possibly we could employ a hail-and-pass procedure for most dry cargo ships, requiring the inspection only of particularly suspicious vessels. We could justify interfering with imports of POL on the ground that POL was directly related to the utilization of the IL-28s.

B. Objective of Quarantine.

The minimum objective of the quarantine should be the removal of the IL-28s. However, a substantial argument can be made in favor of conditioning the termination of the quarantine also upon effective and continuing on-site verification--something which Castro would find very hard to accept.

It is not recommended that the termination of the quarantine be tied explicitly

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to the continuing maintenance of Cuba as a Soviet military base, since this would amount to an extension of the initial terms of the bargain.

One clear incidental benefit of the quarantine would be its adverse effect upon the Cuban economy and, hence upon Castro. If continued any length of time, the quarantine would require the adoption of such restrictions on the use of FOL--both domestic and military--as to accelerate the economic deterioration of Cuba.

C. Means of enforcing the quarantine.

These means would be essentially the same as in the last case; however, it would be desirable to increase the presence of other hemisphere naval forces on the line of blockade.

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D. Priorities

D. Priorities of Enforcement:

In the eventual application of a POL quarantine it would be best to begin with non-Bloc tankers under Bloc charter, proceeding to Bloc tankers, and then to Soviet tankers, in that order.

E. Assumptions under which quarantine recommended.

The above discussion suggests that we should probably not reestablish the quarantine unless the Soviet Union gives military support to Cuban action against our reconnaissance planes.

Once this had been ascertained by events, the desirability of going forward with the quarantine would then have to be determined on the basis of a prediction as to whether or not the Soviets would acquiesce in the quarantine or

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possibly resist it. (In the Kees interview, Khrushchev

is quoted as saying that he might permit one or two ships to stop and be searched but would sink the American vessel that obstructed the third one.)

The quarantine offers the advantage that it need not immediately involve a physical confrontation--although the credibility of the American action would be gravely weakened if, in this second chapter, we did not act with reasonable decision. Presumably, however, some time might be permitted in which to make it possible for Khrushchev to agree to remove the IL-28s.

Arguments can be marshalled both for and against the contention that Khrushchev would acquiesce. In support of such contention, it could be maintained:

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(1) The Soviet Union might be willing to withhold the further supply to Cuba of items on the prescribed list and let the Cuban economy deteriorate, since it may regard Cuba as a wasting asset.

(2) Khrushchev backed down when he was in a much stronger position than he is now. At that time he had missiles pointed against the United States; now he has no such bargaining counter.

(3) By acquiescing the second time, Khrushchev could again seek the propaganda value of being the peace-maker.

Against these arguments it can be asserted:

(1) Khrushchev yielded to the threat of our quarantine once by turning his ships around; he could not afford the humiliation of doing so a second time--especially after the

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missiles

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missiles have been removed and he has thus claimed to have complied fully with his undertakings.

(2) Khrushchev was willing to pull back his ships carrying sophisticated weapons in order to safeguard USSR technology. He would not have a similar motive for holding back tankers filled with POL.

(3) The USSR could not stand idly by while the economy of a Socialist state was slowly strangled; the loss of face and the appearance of impotence would be too high a price for Khrushchev to pay.

(4) We cannot be sure that the Soviets would have acquiesced if we had actually boarded and searched a vessel. After all, we were imposing on a limited form of quarantine; we let their tankers through.

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The resolution of the question posed by these

competing contentions is important but not necessarily controlling. Even if it appeared probable that Khrushchev might insist on running the blockade the proponents of the quarantine could still argue that the reaction would probably be limited to a restricted area. There would be less danger of escalation in a sea action than in the reprisal for an air attack and in the event of sea action we would have clear superiority.

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